26.

THE KINGS Evidence VINDICATED, AS TO THE IMPUTATION OF PERJURY.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

Honoured Sir,

IT is not so much a regard unto your Commands, which is great, as Loyalty unto my King, and Zeal for the Protestant Religion, that compels me, in short, to give you my thoughts concerning the Validity of Mr. *Dangerfield's* Evidence, according to the account I have received of it. You mention his Felonies and Perjuries, as reason sufficient to engage the Wise and Judicious to neglect all that Evidence he hath given in concerning the *Popish Plot*; for, say you, if such a Villain may be credited in matter of Life and Death, what honest man can be secured either of his Estate or Life?

Sir, there is much *seeming* strength of Argument in what you suggest; and had there not been more *real* strength of Reason to over-ballance it, I would submit. But since it may be made with the greatest clearness to appear, That notwithstanding all this, Mr. *Dangerfield's* Evidence may be as good as that of any Papist, whether a continued Bigot to that Superstition, or one who hath abandon'd the abominations of that sort of people; I cannot but presume to be free in the Communications of my thoughts: which

I the rather do, becauſe His Majeſty's Life and the Proteſtant Religion are ſo much concern'd herein.

I ſay, that notwithſtanding the Felonies and Perjuries you ſuggeſt that Mr. *D.* may have been guilty of; I aſſert, that his Evidence is as good as that of any other Papiſt whatſoever, that hath ſhewn himſelf a thorough *Papiſt*, that is, a vile Traytor to a Proteſtant (which they term Heretical) King.

1. That his Felonies cannot make his Evidence leſs Evident than that of the *Papiſts*, is demonſtrable to ſuch as ſhall but conſider, that if a greater and more heinous Crime than that of Felony cannot Invalidate the Evidence of ſuch an one, then ſurely, Felony, the leſſer Crime cannot. But a greater Crime than Felony, namely, High-Treaſon againſt His Majeſties Sacred Life (of which Helliſh Diabolical Treaſons, moſt *Engliſh Papiſts*, but in ſpecial all the Diſcoverers of the Plot have been guilty), cannot ſpoil the Teſtimony of ſuch; for ſhould High-Treaſon, that is a Crime that deſerves the backeſt title, Invalidate the Evidence of a Reforming, Repenting-Traytor, the worſt of Rogues may eſcape the juſt ſeverity of our Laws, and the beſt of Princes be expos'd to the mercileſs Rage of the vileſt of Traytors; And if this great Tranſgreſſion, that is inconſiſtent with all the Rules of Chriſtian Religion, cannot after a Pardon ſpoil the Evidence, How is it that Felony, the leſs (though an odious) evil ſhould? I hate Felony with my very Soul, but I hate a Traytor much more ſo.

But the great thing that ſticks, is Perjury. To which I offer, that though I know not whether Mr. *D.* hath been Convicted as a Perjurer; yet be it ſo, this cannot Invalidate his Evidence, any more than the Evils of a like nature, in the which the Plotting-*Papiſts* have fully involv'd themſelves. For let it be but duly conſidered, and you'l find that the true Reaſon why Perjury ſhould weaken his Evidence, is becauſe a Perjur'd perſon is ſuppos'd to be one who hath ſo far debauch'd his Conſcience, and raz'd out of his Soul the Characters of Truth, that 'tis become impoſſible he ſhould be ever a true man for the future. To which I anſwer.

1. Sincere Repentance is not in this caſe impoſſible; Perjury, for certain, is not the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, neither is it embowell'd with Final Unbelief and Impenitence; whence if you can but find the Characters of a ſincere Penitent on Mr. *D.* our Church, though it had Excommunicated him, would have given him his Abſolution, whereby he would have been fit for our Communion; and for which reaſon, all his old Sins, even his Perjury muſt be blotted out of our Remembrance. And can all this

this be, and his Teſtimony for the King an idle thing? But,

2. Suppoſing Mr. *D.* a Perjur'd perſon, yet nothing more certain than that he hath not proſtituted himſelf more to lyes than the *Papiſts*, nor debauch'd his Conſcience more than the other Plotters have done. For,

1. Do we not know that the Popiſh Religion is but a heap of Lyes? What is it compos'd of, if not of Equivocations, Mental Reſervations, Lyes, Falſhoods, Perjuries, *&c?* I muſt be plain, and aſſure you, that I ſcruple more the Evidence of a Real Papiſt, than I do of a Perjur'd Proteſtant: And my Reaſons are theſe. A Perjur'd Proteſtant doth never Swear falſly, but 'tis contrary to his principle, and may be the product of but a preſent temptation, of which he may ſoon repent; and becauſe of the gripes of his awakened Conſcience, like the *burn't child dread the fire* of ſuch a ſin; but the *Papiſts* principles, are to Lye, Equivocate, and Swear falſly, taking the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy, even when they are reſolv'd for Treaſon againſt His Majeſty, which they do without any rebukes of Conſcience; or if any are ſo ſqueamiſh, as to boggle at it, 'tis but to ſcowr their Kettle, confeſs and receive Abſolution, and all is well; yea they may have Diſpenſations, and what not.

2. It muſt be alſo remembred, that if Perjury will Invalidate Mr. *D's.* Evidence, what Plotting *Papiſts* Evidence, after the greateſt remorſe can be good? Are not all that are engag'd in this devilliſh Plot Sworn to the greateſt ſecreſie? yea with greater and more awful Solemnities, than the kiſſing the Bible; and if they diſcover, are they not all apparently perjur'd, if not according to the formality of our Law, yet as really and truly? Which being ſo, you may ſee how dangerous 'tis to neglect Mr. *Dangerfield's* Evidence, for the ſame thing being pleadable againſt the reſt, we are all an undone people; for if the paſt Perjury of honeſt penitents will Invalidate their future Teſtimonies, what encouragement is this to the remaining Plotters to make any further Diſcoveries? of what uſe is His Majeſties Proclamation? and how are the paſt Plotters animated to go on, being confident that none without Perjury can diſcover them? whereby there is no poſſible guarding againſt the *Papiſts* plottings, nor no bringing them to condign puniſhment: All which tends to the ruine of His Majeſty, the loſs of our Religion, the deſtruction of our Liberties and Lives.

But ſince 'tis as ſure as that the Sun ſhines at Noon-day, that there is a *Popiſh* Plot, which hath been detected by admirable pro-

Providences; 'tis also as certain, that such as have been Perjur'd, have spoken true; that is, they have been by an over-ruling Power engag'd to repent of their devilliſh Treaſons, their vile Perjuries, *&c.* and are become honeſt and true men, good Proteſtants and Loyal Subjects, expiating their paſt Treaſons by enduring, and a patient bearing great Diſcouragements in their ſtedfaſt adhering to the Truth. We have ſeen, that if theſe *German* Dogs would have been drawn aſide by ſuch Cruſts as *Popiſh* Preferments, Thouſands of pounds, *&c.* or driven from an Owning the Truth by ſuch Menaces and Threats as have attended them, as the being *Godfrediz'd* or *Arnoldiz'd*, and the like, we might not have one man to give in Evidence againſt the Lords in the *Tower*, &c.

I had almoſt forgot to deſire you to make a free Intimation of your mind, concerning what are the Qualifications you expect ſhould be found in a *Popiſh* Plotter, who deſigns nothing leſs than the burning Cities, depopulating Countries, deſtroying Proteſtant Kings; What manner of perſons muſt ſuch be? what! muſt they fear an Oath, or a Lye? what! is there no Evil in Murder, and Treaſon, and the Torturings of thouſands of Innocents? What! are all theſe things little things in compariſon of Perjury? or can you in your Conſcience imagine, that ſuch as are men of principles bloody enough to engage in all theſe Cruelties, are yet afraid of a Lye, or of a falſe Oath? Sir, I do verily believe there are none fit for theſe deteſtable Treaſons, unleſs they can Perjure themſelves over and over; yea, and that there are many who can exerciſe their Tongues in Curſing and Damning themſelves and others, yea perjure themſelves again and again, who yet could not embrue their hands in the Blood of Kings, and Thouſands of Innocents. Let not paſt perjury then be ſo formidable a thing to ſtagger your Faith concerning a Plot, whoſe Being hath been diſcover'd with ſo much Evidence and Conviction to all that hear on't.

I beſeech you therefore, that you'l conſider how you neglect the Evidence of ſuch men, who once were perjur'd *Popiſh*, and falſe Traytors, but are now honeſt, good and loyal Proteſtants, whoſe Evidences hath been moſt miraculouſly brought to light, and confirm'd, to the aſtoniſhment of all conſidering and thinking men, both at home and abroad. I need not beg your pardon, ſince if you are a Proteſtant, as I know you are, you cannot but approve of the Zeal of him, who is,

Yours,

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